

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Virginia Trust Company

AND/OR COMMON

Virginia Mutual Building (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

821 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Third (David E. Satterfield, III)

STATE

Virginia

CODE
51COUNTY
(In City)CODE
760

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

c/o William A. Patton, President

NAME Virginia Mutual Savings and Loan

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 2009

CITY, TOWN

Petersburg

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 23803

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE
Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

1973, 1976

FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE
Virginia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Virginia Trust Company building is a pure expression of America's Neo-Classical Revival rendered in heroic proportions. Its facade is in the form of a Roman triumphal arch with an overall height of ninety-one feet. Located on Main Street, in the heart of Richmond's financial district, the building is handsomely framed by the Neo-Classical First and Merchants tower on the east and by the Miesian-style Ross Building on the west. Though considerably lower than either of its neighbors the grand scale of the Virginia Trust Company prevents the building from being dwarfed. Constructed of white granite with terra cotta ornament, the facade, which is reminiscent of the Arch of Titus, consists of massive piers supporting a fourteen-foot-deep Corinthian entablature above which is a twelve-foot attic. The attic is broken by two slight projections directly above the arch. The arch itself is some forty-eight feet high from street level to soffit and is approximately twelve feet deep. The soffit is ornamented with three rows of coffers each having rosettes. The spandrels have foliated borders with foliated wreaths encircling the bank's seals. The scrolled keystone features a female figure in full relief, from which the head unfortunately has been lost. Other ornament on the facade includes anthemion bands at the impost blocks and at the top of the entablature, and foliated bands along the architrave. In the entablature frieze is the inscription: "VIRGINIA TRUST COMPANY", and in the center panel of the attic is the inscription "FOUNDED 1892 / ERECTED 1920."

Aside from its great arch the bank has five openings on the facade. A small window at the base of the east pier lights the president's office; a corresponding doorway at the base of the west pier opens into the building's main stairwell. In the stone screen at the base of the great arch are three openings: the main entrance which is surrounded by an architrave and topped by an entablature inscribed: "VIRGINIA TRUST COMPANY", and two small unornamented windows on either side. The arch itself is filled with a great window with panes separated by bronze mullions. The panes can be opened by use of a complex but ingenious hand-operated mechanism. The area of the window below the arch is set in a bronze frame ornamented with rich arabesques in relief.

The bank's interior consists of an enormous banking room, fifty feet high, which occupies the majority of the interior volume. The walls of the room have a gold marble rusticated base above which is a series of fluted pilasters framing scored plaster panels. The pilasters employ a simplified Corinthian order. Its entablature features a frieze richly ornamented with anthemions and scrolls. Crowning the whole is a magnificent gilded plaster ceiling of extraordinary richness. A tour-de-force of Classical decoration, virtually every surface of the coffered ceiling is ornamented with some form of ancient motif. Accenting the whole are the elaborate rosettes in each coffer. The center of the ceiling is occupied by a twenty-three-foot square surrounded by a lush border of fruits and foliage in relief. Within the border is a Corinthian entablature from which springs a glass octagonal dome. A large metal chandelier hangs from the dome's center. Two similar chandeliers provide additional light.

On the floor, the center of the room is a public space containing two stone desks. Around this space is a gold marble screen composed of Tuscan piers supporting a plain entablature. The bays in the west side of the screen frame tellers' cages, on the east the screen separates the public from an open office area formerly furnished with mahogany roll-top desks. Opposite the main entrance the screen has a center doorway topped by a segmental pediment. Immediately through this opening is the safe deposit vault. Above the vault and filling in the rear portion of the room is a mezzanine which projects in the center above the vault. In the center of the mezzanine's

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920

~~BOSDOM~~/ARCHITECT Alfred Charles Bossom

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Completed in 1921, the Virginia Trust Company Building is one of the foremost examples of America's Neo-Classical Revival, and its main banking room is the grandest and best preserved of its type in the Commonwealth. In vogue from the 1890s through the 1920s the Neo-Classical Revival was inspired by the monumental architecture of the ancient world and found itself expressed most frequently in public buildings, museums, railroad stations, and banks, buildings all necessarily large. The style was especially favored in America where its grandiose scale and clean lines appealed more to Republican plutocrats than did the florid and more essentially regal Beaux Arts style. Having a facade patterned directly after a Roman triumphal arch, the Virginia Trust Company Building is more in the spirit of the Neo-Classicism than most, and the building's lavish use of granite, marble, bronze, and mahogany exemplifies the richness of materials and fine craftsmanship associated with the style. Of special significance is the bank's magnificent gilded, coffered ceiling. Heavily encrusted with Classical ornaments, the ceiling ranks with the finest examples of its type.

Leaders of the Neo-Classical Revival include the architectural firms of McKim, Mead and White, and John Russell Pope. The architect of the Virginia Trust Company, Alfred Charles Bossom (1881-1965), was as able as his more towering contemporaries, but his oeuvre has received little study. Bossom was born in London and was educated at the Royal Academy Schools. He came to America in 1903 and set up an office in New York City where he practiced until 1926 when he returned to England. During that period he received commissions for buildings throughout the country; his Virginia works include the former headquarters building for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, the Union Bank of Richmond (demolished 1935), as well as the Virginia Trust Company. The associate architects for the Virginia Trust Project were Carneal and Johnston of Richmond. After his return to England Bossom had a distinguished career in politics. He was elected to Parliament in 1931, was made a baronet in 1953, and was created a life peer in 1960.

The company for which Bossom provided so dignified a setting was formed in 1892 as the first institution of its type in Virginia. Trust companies were a new concept in the South then; normal banks were not permitted to have trust departments and special enabling legislation was required to charter the Richmond company. Richmond's tobacco industry, as well as banking leaders, were mainly responsible for fostering the need for corporate executors and trustees, and many heads of the tobacco companies served on the Virginia Trust's first board of directors. The first president was James B. Pace, a tobacco manufacturer who at the time was also the president of Planters National Bank (later State Planters Bank, now United Virginia Bank). Other Richmonders serving on the board were T. C. Williams, Jr., Joseph Bryan, and C. W. Branch. The company had three locations before it found its home at 821 East Main Street in the heart of Richmond's financial district. That Main Street address was acquired in 1919 and construction of Bossom's building began shortly afterward. It was opened for business on May 31, 1921. In 1973 the company merged with the Virginia National Bank and its name ceased to exist in 1976

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 9 & 7 & 8 PAGE #1

(9)

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1969.

(7)

DESCRIPTION

balustrade is a handsome clock. On the rear wall above the mezzanine is a large arched window flanked by smaller rectangular windows. Located under the mezzanine are various offices including the Tudor-style directors' room paneled in mahogany with an elaborate strapwork plaster ceiling. Additional office space is located in the two floors above the banking room. This area is reached by the stair in the west pier. More offices, as well as four large vault rooms, are on the lower level. Storage, utility, and furnace rooms are in the sub-basement. In all, the building has six levels.

Except for the loss of the original furniture, the building stands virtually unaltered and in an excellent state of preservation.

CCL

(8)

SIGNIFICANCE

when the company's operations were moved to the Wheat Securities Building nearby. That same year the granite arched building at 821 East Main was sold to the Virginia Mutual Savings and Loan Company which will make its headquarters there.

CCL/MTP

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bosson, Alfred Charles. Photocopy of original architectural drawings, in archives of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 12 sheets, dated 1919.
- Mattison, Lewis. Heritage of a Half Century. Richmond, Virginia: 1942.
- McDowell, Charles L., Jr. "The Virginia Trust Company of Richmond, Virginia". Commonwealth, June, 1957.
- O'Neal, William B. Architectural Drawing in Virginia 1819-1969. Charlottesville, Virginia: 1969. (See Continuation Sheet #1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 28,46,8,0 4,15,7,1,6,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
ORGANIZATION

DATE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
STREET & NUMBER

January 1977
TELEPHONE

221 Governor Street

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Richmond,

Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director
TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

